

**INTRODUCTION BOTANY.** By Alexander Nelson, B.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc. Second Edition. (Pp. viii + 479; figs. 121. 30s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1962.

THE author originally hoped to provide a background of biological knowledge and at the same time to interest the student in applications of botany to his life work, but claims only the first objective for this book. As far as medicine is concerned it is doubtful if botany has now any application except in so far as it teaches some basic principles in biology. The author has had to devote much space to elementary physical and biological chemistry and he gives a presentation of genetics inadequate for general biology.

Nowadays medical schools are integrating their teaching in pathology, medicine, surgery and obstetrics so that students are introduced to different aspects of their work at the same time and much repetition, misunderstanding and apparent contradiction in common subjects is avoided. Admittedly textbooks reflecting this have not yet been written. Some such "combined course" in general biology would obviate much separate discussion of common subjects. With the present curriculum the value of this book to the student will depend on the individual foibles of teachers and examiners who usually have little or no real understanding of their specialised subject in the broad field of human biology constituting modern medicine.

J. E. M.

**THE BRITISH NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE.** By Donald McL. Johnson, M.B., B.Ch., M.A. (Pp. 234. 21s.) London: Johnson, 1962.

THIS work reviews the history of the practice of medicine, general and hospital, in the years leading up to the "brave new world" which had its beginnings in July, 1948.

The author knew something of the events which went with the birth of National Health Insurance in the days of Lloyd George, and from his experience of both general and hospital practice under the old and new regimes, he has much of interest to tell.

The contemporary story of the spending of millions upon millions of pounds, rising yearly in a steeply ascending spiral of expenditure, shows how this has arisen and how little of this aspect was foreseen by the various Governments in the United Kingdom, political colour of either side being no more prescient than the other.

The author has much to say about the difficulties of general practice and of the hospital service. There is a thread running through the book of criticism of the attitude of the B.M.A., but the author, like many other critics, does not seem to have taken a very active part in the activities of the Association in relation to the National Health Service.

In short, this is a very interesting book by a man with wide experience of the N.H.S., and in your reviewer's mind, there is much criticism of sound value, although he hopes that the suggestion of a National Health Parliament will remain a suggestion and nothing more.

As it is, too many with insufficient experience and lack of knowledge of both general practice and hospital practice are offering views, particularly, as your reviewer well knows, in the field of hospital administration.

This very interesting, instructive and challenging book should be read by every person with an interest in the Health Services.

H. I. MCC.

**THE HISTOLOGY OF THE BODY TISSUES.** By Margaret Gillison. Second Edition. (Pp. xvi + 270; figs. 132. 21s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1962.

THIS short text is beautifully illustrated by black and white drawings and gives a clear introduction to the tissues of the body. The author has revised it for the use of students in their first year biology course and its use then would be profitable. The medical student will later require further details especially of organ structure, but the book, and especially the diagrams, should enable him to gain a clear understanding of basic structure. It is just this clear understanding of fundamentals that some students lack when they attempt to study abnormal histology.

J. E. M.